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State Fire Marshal Reminds People to Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery

Each year around Halloween, we turn the clocks back one hour. This is also a good time to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. "The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. when most families are sleeping," says State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan. "Smoke alarm maintenance is a simple, effective way to reduce fire home deaths. Children and senior citizens are most at risk, and a working smoke alarm can give them the extra seconds they need to get out safely."

Change Your Clocks. Change Your Batteries. Change Your Detectors?

This year when you plan your purchase of fresh batteries for your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms take a second to inspect the alarm and check its date of manufacture. All electronic devices have a limited life span. Your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms have a lifespan too; you need to replace older devices with new ones to protect your home and family.

If your smoke alarms are 10 years old or more, it's time to replace them. If your carbon monoxide alarms are 5 to 7 years old, depending upon the manufacturer, they need to be replaced. Check for a date of manufacture on the back of the device, or consult the manufacturer's instructions for the recommended replacement date. If you can't tell how old they are it's time to replace them.

Coan said, "Remember that on Sunday, November 2, when you Change Your Clocks, and Change Your Batteries, Check your detector's age."

Reminder: Be Careful with Halloween Costumes, Decorations & Treats

- Be sure all parts of the costume are labeled flame retardant and only use flameproof crepe paper.
- Children should carry flashlights and their costumes should be bright-colored or have reflective tape to highlight them.
- Costumes should not have trailing material or tails long enough to cause falls.

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- Use a small flashlight in pumpkins instead of a candle.
- Throw out any treats that appear tampered with, or home-packaged foods unless certain of the source.
- Don't use fireworks - they are dangerous and illegal in Massachusetts!

For more information on Halloween Safety contact your local fire department or look at the Department of Fire Services website at www.mass.gov/dfs, click on ***Fire Safety Topics*** and then ***Halloween Safety***, or call the Public Fire Safety Education Hotline at **1-877-9-NO-FIRE**.